

Remarks:

This amendment is submitted in an earnest effort to advance this case to issue without delay. The examiner has indicated that the case contains allowable subject matter.

Claim 1 has been amended to overcome the §112 rejections. Two of the limitations proposed by the examiner - shifting the workpiece to a second machining station and machining one of the holes - have not been inserted into this claim as it was not seen that these limitations were necessary to define over the art.

As shown in FIGS. 3a, 3b, and 5, amended claim 1 describes a method of machining a hollow metal workpiece 9 having a plurality of throughgoing holes 27, 29, 30, 31 and at least one port 35 or 43. The method comprises the steps of:

picking up from a transfer station (on conveyor 21 in FIG. 21) by a grab 8 the hollow workpiece 9 and displacing the workpiece 9 from the transfer station to a machining station (17 or 18 in FIG. 2);

thereafter, while holding the workpiece 9 in the machining station (17 or 18 in FIG. 2) with the grab 8,

a) engaging a tool 26 from outside with a first exterior surface of the workpiece 9 and thereby finishing the first exterior surface (FIG. 3a);

- b) reorienting the workpiece 9 by the grab 8 and engaging a second tool 28 with a second exterior surface of the workpiece 9 offset from the first exterior surface and thereby finishing the second exterior surface (FIG. 3b);
- c) fitting a third tool 15 through the port 35 or 43 of the workpiece 9 and positioning the third tool 15 inside the workpiece 9 adjacent one of the holes 27, 29, 30, 31 (FIG. 6);
- d) coupling a drive spindle 36 through the one hole 31 of the workpiece 9 with the third tool 15 and machining an inner surface of the workpiece 9 adjacent the one hole 31 with the third tool 15; and
- e) repeating steps b), c), and d) to finish another interior surface of the workpiece 9 adjacent another of the holes 27, 29, 30, 31; and

displacing the workpiece 9 from the machining station 17 or 18 back to the transfer station (at conveyor 21) and releasing it from the grab 8.

These amendments clearly eliminate the unclear parts of the main claim without introducing unnecessary limitations into this claim.

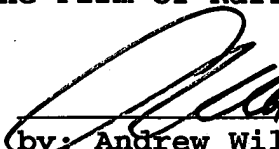
The examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the restriction requirement and withdrawal of claims 6 to 9. Claim 6 is virtually identical in scope and elements recited to allowable claim 1. It is not seen what purpose is served, except perhaps to generate official fees, in requiring refiling for these apparatus claims. They are in the same class and the search for both would be identical. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Thus all of the claims in the case are clearly in condition for allowance. Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

If only minor problems that could be corrected by means of a telephone conference stand in the way of allowance of this

case, the examiner is invited to call the undersigned to make the necessary corrections.

Respectfully submitted,  
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23 February 2006  
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Enclosure:       None.